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ABSTRACT

The major goals of the practicum with 12 severely language impaired elementary students were: to increase and enhance the students' low self-concepts, and to reduce absenteeism among the students. A 3-month self-concept guidance program for these students was developed and implemented. Specific guidance activities were conducted in three areas: (1) individual counseling, (2) small group counseling, and (3) classroom guidance sessions. Parent conferences were conducted on a monthly basis. "Good Citizen of the Week" certificates were also earned by the students on a weekly basis at school. After the conclusion of the 3-month guidance program, eight students improved scores of 10 points or higher as measured by a self-concept appraisal inventory. The mean average in self-concept points gained for all 12 students was 20 points. Absenteeism was also reduced among the students by 33%. The teacher of the Severely Language Impaired class stated that the self-concept guidance program had been "very helpful" to her students. (Author/CL)

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The Development and Implementation of a Self-Concept Guidance Program for Severely Language Impaired Students

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NOVA UNIVERSITY

The Development and Implementation of a Self-Concept Guidance Program for Severely Language Impaired Students

By

John Elmore Garrett III

Cluster XVI

Practicum Report Presented to the Ed. D. Program
In Early Childhood
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Degree of Doctor of Education

NOVA UNIVERSITY

1985

PRACTICUM APPROVAL SHEET

This practicum took place as described.

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July 1, 1985
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This practicum report was submitted by John Elmore Garrett III under the direction of the reviewer listed below. It was submitted to the Ed. D. Program in Early Childhood and approved in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Education in Early Childhood at Nova University.

Approved:

September 12, 1985
Date of Final Approval of Report

Dr. JoEllen Salce-Rogers
Reviewer

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ABSTRACT

The Development and Implementation of a Self-Concept Guidance Program for Severely Language Impaired Students. Garrett III, John E., 1985: Practicum Report, Nova University Ed. D. Program in Early Childhood. Descriptors: Elementary Education/Early Childhood Education/Self Concept/Self Esteem/Guidance Programs/Severely Language Impaired/ Language Handicaps.

This practicum focused on an elementary school class in Brevard County, Florida of severely language impaired students. The students demonstrated behaviors characteristic of children with poor self-concepts. The major goals of the practicum were:
1) to increase and enhance the student's low self-concept, and
2) to reduce absenteeism among the students.

The writer developed and implemented a three month self-concept guidance program for these students. The writer, who is the School Guidance Counselor, organized specific guidance activities into three areas in order to accomplish the stated goals and objectives of this practicum. The three guidance areas were: 1) individual counseling, 2) small group counseling, and 3) classroom guidance sessions. Parent conferences were conducted on a monthly basis. "Good Citizen of the Week" certificates were also earned by the S.L.I. students on a weekly basis at school.

All 12 students from the S.L.I. class participated in the self-concept enhancement program. After the conclusion of the three month guidance program, eight students had improved scores of 10 points or higher as measured by a self-concept appraisal inventory. The mean average in self-concept points gained for all 12 students was 20 points. Absenteeism was also reduced among the students by 33%. The teacher of the Severely Language Impaired class stated that the self-concept guidance program had been "very helpful" to her students. It was also recommended that the self-concept guidance program be offered in the future to other classes in the school.

The Development and Implementation of a Self-Concept Guidance Program for Severely Language Impaired Students

Chapter I

Introduction

Description of Community, including Socio-Economic and Geographic Factors

The city of Melbourne, Florida is located in Brevard County, which is on Florida's east coast, midway between Jacksonville and Miami. In 1969 the electors of Eau Gallie and Melbourne voted to abolish their cities and establish a brand-new municipality; the name Melbourne was retained for the new city. Melbourne's incorporated land area is 29 square miles, with a population of 49,904 (Hain, 1985).

Melbourne's economy is solid and well-balanced. The economy is enhanced by tourism. The following industries also help the local economy: electronics, aviation, light manufacturing, opticals, communications, and agriculture. The average annual temperature in Melbourne is 72.4 degrees, dipping to an average of 60.7 degrees in January and up to a summer average of 81.6 degrees. The average annual rainfall is 52.25 inches (Hain, 1985).

There are both private and public schools in the city of Melbourne. There are 14 public schools in Melbourne, which includes nine elementary schools, three middle schools, and two high schools. Students are offered the opportunity to participate in appropriate educational programs and activities without regard to race, color, religion, national origin, sex, or handicap. Many families have moved

to the Melbourne area because of the many employment opportunities, ideal climate, and good schools.

Writer's Role and Responsibilities

Harbor City Elementary School, where the author of this practicum is employed, is one of the nine elementary schools located in the city of Melbourne. During the 1984-85 school year, Harbor City Elementary School had a total of 511 students enrolled. The school has educational programs for both regular and exceptional education students. The instructional staff consists of 18 regular classroom teachers, three Specific Learning Disability teachers, one Severely Language Impaired teacher, one Speech/Language clinician, one Primary Specialist, one Guidance Counselor, one Music teacher, one Physical Education teacher, one Librarian, three Chapter I teachers, and 10 classroom aides.

The author of this practicum is the Guidance Counselor for both the regular and the exceptional education students at Harbor City Elementary School. The author's specific responsibilities and duties include: chairing the school Guidance Committee, which meets every Wednesday morning; providing individual, small group, and classroom guidance sessions; testing students for the various exceptional education programs; attending and representing the school at staffings; record keeping; teaching parenting classes; consulting with faculty and staff personnel; communicating with district and community leaders; and conducting parent conferences.

Chapter II

Study of the Problem

Description of the Problem Situation

One of the exceptional education classes at Harbor City Elementary School is the self-contained class for Severely Language Impaired students. The S.L.I. students are bused into this special class from areas throughout south Brevard County. There are 12 students (six girls and six boys) in grades kindergarten through third grade in this special class. The students range in age from six to nine years.

Many of the students in the Severely Language Impaired (S.L.I.) class have demonstrated behaviors characteristic of children with poor self-concepts. Specifically, the poor self-concept behaviors manifested by these young students were: severe speech and language problems, infrequent eye-to-eye contact, shyness, unhappiness, lack of social skills, and absenteeism from school.

Before this practicum was implemented, one of the reasons why the problem of the student's poor self-concept had not been solved was because the school had mainly focused upon the student's speech and language problems, while overlooking their basic social and emotional needs. Briefly stated then, the problem was that many of the students in the Severely Language Impaired class at Harbor City Elementary school had poor self-concepts.

Documentation of the Problem

These severe problems were evident from the following four sources of information. First, the author had consulted and conferenced frequently with the teacher of the Severely Language Impaired class at

Harbor City Elementary School concerning the emotional and behavioral problems of the S.L.I. students. These concerns had been documented at the school's weekly Guidance Committee Meetings. The author chaired this committee during the 1984-85 school year.

Second, the School Psychologist had verified the emotional and behavioral problems of the students in the S.L.I. class from observations and psychological testing. These reports are contained in the student's confidential records at school. The School Psychologist also attended the school's weekly Guidance Committee Meetings.

Third, after the practicum proposal was approved, the author administered the I Feel ... Me Feel Self-Concept Appraisal Inventory (Yeatts & Bentley, 1970) pretest to the students in the S.L.I. class to measure their self-concept and feelings about themselves. Five of the students had scores below 160 points as measured on this pre-test. After the three month implementation period concluded, the post-test of the self-concept appraisal inventory was also administered to the students. The total results from this self-concept inventory are listed in Appendix A.

Fourth, absenteeism had also been a part of the problem with the S.L.I. students. During the three months (12 weeks) at school preceding this practicum, the S.L.I. students had been absent from school for a total of 42 days (Appendix B). These four sources of information were employed to document the underlying problems of the S.L.I. student's poor self-concept.

Analysis of the Causes

There were four basic causes for the low self-concept of the severely language impaired students. First, the children in the S.L.I. class focused upon their weaknesses rather than upon their strengths. Academic training with these students had concentrated upon their speech and language problems, while overlooking their basic social and emotional needs.

Second, these children, because of their exceptionality, often felt incapable and insecure. Many of the children cried during the school day. They often felt real apprehension and anxiety about performing simple academic and routine tasks throughout the school.

Third, these children were often shy about expressing themselves verbally. Many were afraid to walk to the school office to pick up messages for their classroom. Many of these children communicated in whispers. They had a great amount of shyness, and a small degree of self-confidence.

Fourth, these children often felt unhappy and unsuccessful in dealing with life's experiences. Many of these children were teased because of their poor communication skills. This resulted in a decreased desire to communicate. Past research (Davison & Neale, 1974) also focused upon similar unhappy childhood behaviors and problems of exceptional education students. Children can be taught ways to be happier. These were the four basic causes why the students in the S.L.I. class had poor self-concepts.

Relationship of the Problem to the Literature

Two of the basic problems that the children in the Severely Language Impaired class had were: 1)low self-concepts, 2) poor communication skills. Glauser (1984) recently researched the relationship between impressions of the self-concept and communication skills. Children generally behave in ways consistent with their self-concepts and self-perceptions. A total of 74 students participated in Glauser's study. Results of the study provide evidence that feelings of personal regard are manifested in social behavior. This study showed that children low in both self-esteem and verbal dominance feel their lives are not worthwhile. The students in the S.L.I. class were also low both in self-esteem and verbal dominance. This study also emphasizes the fact that the self-concept needs to be enhanced on a multidimensional level. Wholistic treatment is essential.

Some of the students in the S.L.I. class were also behind academically. Several of the children were also staffed into the S.L.D. Resource program. Wirth (1977) researched the relationship between children's feelings and self-concept and how well they perform in school. Students who experience difficulty in achieving success academically often see themselves as inadequate and incapable of achievement in other areas as well. In this study, 95 students in four public and three nonpublic elementary schools were selected. Instructional activities were designed to enhance the children's self-concept by helping them develop an increased sense of responsibility for learning. It was found that much encouragement, praise, and

recognition of accomplishments must be given in order for children to develop a sense of self-worth. The author included many opportunities during the implementation phase of this practicum for the S.L.I. students to receive much encouragement, praise, and recognition for their accomplishments in the various counseling settings. "Good Citizen of the Week" awards were also presented to the students on a weekly basis. This helped to increase their self-concept also.

W. E. Simon and M. G. Simon (1975) also found that there is a positive relationship between self-esteem and academic achievement. There were 87 elementary students, 45 males and 42 females, who took part in this study. In this research study, self-esteem was measured by Coopersmith's Self-Esteem Inventory. The students were also given the Lorge-Thorndike Intelligence Test. The results of this study indicate that self-esteem is positively related to academic achievement. Furthermore, Bell (1973) also wrote of the relationship between a child's self-concept and his day-to-day academic accomplishments. The self-concept definitely needs to be enhanced on a daily basis. This was also the author's goal at Harbor City Elementary School.

Durbin (1982) studied and wrote of the importance to aid students in developing a positive self-concept. This study included nine group guidance sessions with elementary students. As a result of the self-concept tests and the self-concept surveys, all participants in this study showed an increase in positive feelings about themselves. Saracho (1980) also studied how teachers can help enhance a student's self-concept. A negative self-concept can be transformed into a

positive self-concept. This takes much planning and dedication on the teacher's part.

In an interesting study, Weinhold and Hilferty (1983) researched methods that have been successful in strengthening the self-concept on the elementary level. They proposed four key settings that the elementary school guidance counselor can intervene with to strengthen the student's self-concept. The four key settings are: individual counseling, small group counseling, family group counseling, and classroom group guidance sessions. Two other researchers (Corey, 1977; Yalom, 1975) also studied the value and importance of counseling in strengthening the self-concept. Counseling can be an important part of educating the whole child. Counseling can help enhance the child's self-concept. Mussen, Conger, and Kagan (1979) determined that the child's self-concept is a product of his or her experiences. Positive experiences help in developing a positive self-concept. The author also developed positive counseling experiences for the S.L.I. students at Harbor City Elementary School.

The development of a healthy self-concept in children must become a high priority if schools are to help students reach their full potential. Gardner (1978) suggested ways for the schools to enhance the self-concept of students. Self-concept enhancement should be an integral part of our educational philosophy. Schools should first accept students as they are. J.A. Schickedanz, D.I. Schickedanz, and Forsyth (1982) also concluded that the schools should become more accepting of students. Acceptance is an important first step in the

development of a student's self-concept. It is possible to change self-concepts. These studies indicate that students behave in ways consistent with their self-perceptions. Positive reinforcement is also necessary in order for students to develop healthy self-concepts. The literature researched also emphasizes the need for the self-concept to be nurtured, developed, and enhanced on a multidimensional level. T.D. Yawkey (1980) also found in his research that it is extremely important for significant individuals to nurture and enhance the self-concept of children. The author integrated these important research studies into this practicum through various counseling settings. The author also accepted the students from the S.L.I. class as capable and loveable human beings.

Chapter III

Anticipated Outcomes and Evaluation Instruments

Goals and Expectations

This practicum was designed to assist the students in the Severely Language Impaired class at Harbor City Elementary School in two areas: 1) to increase and enhance their low self-concept, and 2) to reduce absenteeism. The author, who is the school Guidance Counselor, has developed and implemented a self-concept guidance program to meet these two general goals.

Behavior Expected

The following behavioral objectives and goals were projected for this practicum:

1. Eighty percent of the students in the S.L.I. class will have improved self-concepts. Improved constitutes at least a ten point gain on the I Feel... Me Feel Self-Concept Appraisal Inventory (Yeatts & Bentley, 1970).
2. Students in the S.L.I. class will have improved attendance records. Student absenteeism will decrease by 50%.

Mechanism for Recording Unexpected Events

There were three mechanisms used to record unexpected events during the practicum adventure. The three mechanisms projected for this practicum were:

1. The author will keep a daily practicum journal to record both expected and unexpected events.

2. The students from the Severely Language Impaired class will be making their own journal booklets about their feelings during the practicum implementation period. The journal booklets will be entitled: I am special (Schwartz, 1978).
3. The author, who is the Chairman of the school Guidance Committee, will keep a weekly log of related guidance services and activities. The school Guidance Committee meets at Harbor City Elementary School every Wednesday morning at 8:15 A.M. The progress of the practicum self-concept guidance program will also be reviewed at this time.

Measurement of Objectives

To measure the two goals and behavioral objectives of this practicum, the author used the following evaluation methods. First, to measure the improvement in the student's self-concept, the I Feel ... Me Feel Self-Concept Appraisal Inventory was employed. This self-concept appraisal inventory was developed by Pearline Peters Yeatts and Ernest L. Bentley in 1970. It includes 40 questions regarding how children feel about themselves. Children received the following self-concept points according to how they responded to each individual question: one point: Very Sad; two points: A Little Sad; three points: Not Sad, Not Happy; four points: A Little Happy; and five points: Very Happy. This self-concept test was selected for this practicum because the answers are pictorially displayed, which eliminated the need for the Severely Language Impaired students to respond verbally. The test is also suitable for use on the primary school level.

After the parents of the S.L.I. students were contacted concerning the self-concept guidance program, the pre-test of the self-concept appraisal inventory was administered to the students. After the three month implementation period concluded, the post-test of the self-concept appraisal inventory was administered to the students in the Severely Language Impaired class.

Second, to measure the improvement in the student's attendance at school, the school's attendance records were analyzed before and after the self-concept guidance program implementation date. The combined total number of absences for all of the S.L.I. students for the three months (12 weeks) preceding the practicum implementation date had already been recorded (Appendix B). After the three month implementation period had concluded, the combined total number of absences for all of the S.L.I. students during the three months self-concept guidance program at school were recorded and compared to their attendance records before the guidance program was implemented.

Description of Plans for Analyzing Results

The results of the practicum were analyzed using two- methods. First, the author compared the student's I Feel ... Me Feel Self-Concept Appraisal Inventory (Yeatts & Bentley, 1970) pre-test scores with their post-test total scores on each individual S.L.I. student. A minimum of 40 points (Very Sad) and a maximum of 200 points (Very Happy) was possible on the 40 question self-concept appraisal inventory. The author's standard of achievement was that 80% of the students in the S.L.I. class would have improved scores of at least 10

points on the self-concept appraisal inventory. The student's pre-test scores were compared to their post-test scores. The students in the Severely Language Impaired class (12) were assigned a number from 1 to 12, and their total scores were tabulated (Appendix A).

Second, the combined total number of absences for all of the S.L.I. students for the three months preceding the self-concept guidance program had already been recorded. Later these absences were compared to the combined total number of absences for all of the S.L.I. students during the three month implementation period. The author's standard of achievement was that student absenteeism would decrease by 50%. A six month attendance record table was employed to record the following data: 1) the total absences for the three months (12 weeks) before the guidance program was implemented; 2) the total absences for the three months (12 weeks) during the self-concept guidance program; and 3) the percent increase or decrease in absenteeism for the students in the Severely Language Impaired class at Harbor City Elementary School (Appendix B).

Chapter IV

Solution Strategy

Discussion and Evaluation of Solutions

In evaluating the actual solutions that other professionals have employed to enhance the self-concept of students, the author would like to summarize these solutions in six areas. The six basic areas are: 1) the use of bibliotherapy; 2) enhance the self-concept of students on a multidimensional level; 3) use a variety of counseling settings; 4) encourage positive statements; 5) use a variety of guidance activities; and 6) increase the student's responsibility for learning.

The philosophy and practice towards enhancing the self-concept of elementary school students has been researched for many years. Many teachers and counselors have enjoyed using Jack Canfield's and Harold C. Well's handbook: 100 ways to enhance self-concept in the classroom (Canfield & Wells, 1976). This excellent handbook provides 100 practical and concrete ways and methods to help young people feel better about themselves. Using this handbook is one form of bibliotherapy. The author used this handbook during this practicum with the students from the Severely Language Impaired class. Also Purkey (1970) researched the relationship between the self-concept and academic success in school. Academic success in school increases one's self-concept. However, ability is only one factor in achieving academic success.

Glauser (1984) found that there is a close relationship between impressions of self and communication. There were 74 students that

participated in Glauser's study. Guidance activities were designed to enhance the self-concept of the students. Glauser proposed that the self-concept be enhanced on a multidimensional level in order to assist the students in reaching their full potential. Glauser's research corresponds closely with this practicum. The author also worked with the severely language impaired students on a multidimensional level during this practicum. The author found that children behave in ways consistent with how they feel about themselves.

Weinhold and Hilferty (1983) conducted a study and found four key settings that elementary school guidance counselors can employ to strengthen the student's self-concept. They recommended the following settings: individual counseling, small group counseling, family group counseling, and classroom group guidance sessions. These counseling settings should be employed on a regular basis. These settings have been found to be successful in strengthening the students' self-concept on the elementary school level. The author agrees with these key guidance settings completely in helping students reach their full potential. These four settings can help enrich the self-concept of primary age students, especially those students in exceptional education programs.

Durbin (1982) states that it is important for the elementary school guidance counselor to deal with many areas in developing the student's self-concept. One solution recommended by Durbin to strengthen the self-concept of elementary students was to encourage the students to make positive statements one to another. This positive

approach needs to be reinforced on a regular basis. The author agrees with Durbin in this regard. Positive statements can help create a more positive self-concept. Durbin conducted nine group guidance sessions with the elementary students. At the conclusion of Durbin's study, all participants showed an increase in positive feelings about themselves.

W.E. Simon and M.G. Simon (1975) concluded that there is a positive relationship between self-esteem and academic performance. There were 87 elementary students, 45 males and 42 females, who actively participated in this study. The guidance activities employed by the authors assisted the students both socially and academically. In this research study, the student's self-esteem was measured by Coopersmith's Self-Esteem Inventory. The Lorge-Thorndike Intelligence Test was also administered to the students. The results of this study linked self-esteem closely with academic achievement. The author agrees with the solution recommended by the authors of this study. Appropriate guidance activities can enhance the self-esteem of students.

Wirth (1977) worked with 95 students from four public and three non-public elementary schools. The actual solution proposed by Wirth was to develop within the students an increased sense of responsibility for learning. This was accomplished through various instructional guidance activities. Wirth also found that much encouragement, praise, and recognition is necessary in order for the student's struggling self-concept to emerge in a positive manner. The author agrees with Wirth completely on this issue. A positive approach was absolutely

essential for this self-concept guidance program to be successful with the students from the Severely Language Impaired class. In conclusion, the self-concept definitely influences both academic achievement and classroom behavior (Purkey, 1970). Children do behave in ways consistent with how they feel about themselves. The author designed this practicum with these research solutions in mind. The author worked in a positive manner to help the students from the S.L.I. class to feel better about themselves.

Description and Justification for Solution Selected

The author selected the solutions that were appropriate for this practicum by reviewing the successes that other professionals had employed in their research studies. In order for the author to accomplish the goals and expectations stated in this practicum, it was necessary to concentrate upon the positive behaviors expected from the students in the S.L.I. class on a regular basis. A varied, positive approach to learning focusing upon the student's strengths was essential. No one can be good at everything but everyone can be good at something (Peters & Raupp, 1980). This concept was emphasized on a a daily basis throughout the implementation period of this practicum.

Calsyn, Quicke, and Harris (1980) state that teachers and counselors interested in increasing the self-concept of students need to include guidance exercises and activities specifically aimed at self-enhancement. The author organized specific guidance exercises and activities into three areas in order to accomplish the stated goals and expectations of this practicum. The three areas were: individual

counseling, small group counseling, and classroom guidance sessions with the S.L.I. students.

The author used bibliotherapy extensively with the students because of the success that other professionals had achieved in this area (Bessell & Palomares, 1972; Canfield & Wells, 1976; Grimm & Mitchell, 1976; Simon, 1973). Bibliotherapy can be very useful in strengthening the self-concept of students. Students readily identify with the characters portrayed in the stories. Finding out how others solved similar problems in the stories, may help the students in solving their own personal problems.

Several professionals (Glauser, 1984; W.E. Simon & M.G. Simon, 1975) achieved success in employing a variety of guidance activities on a multidimensional level. The author also decided to employ a variety of guidance activities on a multidimensional level with the severely language impaired students. The following self-concept guidance materials were chosen for this practicum because of the positive reviews that have been made concerning their use with students: 1) I am special (Guidance Booklet; Schwartz, 1978); 2) Developing understanding of self and others (DUSO Guidance Kit; Dinkmeyer, 1970); 3) I am, I can, I will (Audiotapes; Rogers, 1979); 4) Happy to be me! (Guidance Activity Cards; M. Carbo & N. Carbo, 1976); and 5) Good citizen awards (Certificates). These are the guidance materials and the reasons why these solutions were selected for this practicum.

Calendar Plan of Implementation

The following calendar plan describes the self-concept guidance program that the author followed with the S.L.I. students from start to finish. In March, 1985 the author completed the following tasks on this practicum: started a practicum journal; consulted with the S.L.I. teacher and the school's Speech/Language clinician concerning the goals and the specific objectives of the program; contacted and conferenced with the parents of the S.L.I. students for permission to work with their children at school in this special guidance program; administered the I Feel ... Me Feel Self-Concept Appraisal Inventory (Yeatts & Bentley, 1970) to the S.L.I. students; consulted with the School Psychologist concerning the details of the guidance program; and conducted individual, small group, and classroom guidance sessions with the students.

During the month of April, 1985 the author continued with the monthly parent conferences with the parents of the S.L.I. students. The parents were also notified whenever their son or daughter was selected and nominated as the "Good Citizen of the Week" from the S.L.I. classroom. Also at the school's weekly Guidance Committee meetings, the author informed the committee concerning the progress of the S.L.I. students in the self-concept guidance program.

During the month of May, 1985 the author continued the recording of the following important events: parent conferences; student experiences; Guidance Committee Meetings; individual, small group, and classroom guidance sessions; and other significant happenings in the

practicum journal. In June, 1985 at the conclusion of the three month implementation period, the author administered the I Feel ... Me Feel Self-Concept Appraisal Inventory (Yeatts & Bentley, 1970) post-test to each student in the S.L.I. class. Their scores were recorded and compared with their pre-test scores. The mean was also computed from these scores. The attendance records were also recorded and analyzed. Finally, the results of this practicum were shared with the Harbor City Elementary School faculty and staff, the School Psychologist, and the parents of the S.L.I. students.

Report of Action Taken

Since the beginning of this practicum, the author kept a practicum journal on a daily basis at the school site. Included in this journal were the author's notes on the important events that occurred during this practicum. The teacher of the Severely Language Impaired class was very cooperative and helpful in assisting the author in scheduling the individual, small group, and classroom guidance sessions with the students.

The author also shared the goals, specific objectives, and progress of this self-concept guidance program at the school's Guidance Committee Meetings that were held on Wednesday mornings. School and District personnel were consulted on a weekly basis at these meetings. The author served as the chairman of this committee during the 1984-85 school year.

The author contacted the parents of the S.L.I. students concerning the self-concept guidance program at the beginning of this practicum.

Following permission to implement this practicum, the author administered the I Feel ... Me Feel Self-Concept Appraisal Inventory (Yeatts & Bentley, 1970) pre-test to each student on an individual basis in the Guidance Counselor's office. These pre-test scores were evaluated and recorded (Appendix A).

The individual counseling sessions were conducted in the Guidance Counselor's office. This office is located conveniently next to the S.L.I. classroom. The individual sessions were 20 minutes in length. Each student from the S.L.I. class came for individual counseling one day per week for 12 weeks. Four students came for individual counseling on Monday afternoons, four came on Wednesday afternoons, and the final four students came on Friday afternoons. During these individual counseling sessions, the students discussed their personal feelings, their friends, and any problems that they might be having at school. The sessions concluded with the students listening to the audiotapes I am, I can, I will (Rogers, 1979). This allowed the students an opportunity to relax, meditate, and reduce feelings of stress and anxiety. The author suggests that the individual counseling sessions be increased in time from 20 to 30 minutes in the future.

The small group counseling sessions were held on a weekly basis for 12 weeks in the school Guidance Counselor's office. There were two small group counseling sessions per week. Each session was held for 40 minutes. Six S.L.I. students came for small group counseling on Tuesday afternoons, and six students came on Thursday afternoons.

These sessions were held and conducted after lunch, between 1:00 P.M. and 1:40 P.M. There were three boys and three girls in each group.

The author encouraged the S.L.I. students in their social development and followed the book Making friends (Adcock & Segal, 1983) during the small group counseling sessions. The author and the students role played appropriate ways to play and work together. Peer interaction was encouraged and positively promoted. The author also incorporated the Happy to be me! (M. Carbo & N. Carbo, 1976) guidance activity cards during several sessions. The guidance workbook Mostly me: Activities for developing self-concept (Grimm & Mitchell, 1976) was also popular with the students. These guidance activities focused upon the strengths, accomplishments, and talents of the students. The students also made and colored their own I am special (Schwartz, 1978) guidance booklets during these small group counseling sessions. The author rewarded each student with a "scratch and sniff" sticker for their outstanding work at the conclusion of each small group counseling session. The author worked hard to keep the sessions positive in nature. The students were encouraged to do their best work in all of the sessions. The students looked forward to these small group sessions with the school Guidance Counselor.

The practicum also included work with all of the S.L.I. students in their own classroom. For 45 minutes on Tuesday mornings and for 45 minutes on Thursday mornings the author presented special classroom guidance sessions on a variety of topics. The sessions started after the morning school announcements were over at 9:15 A.M. and concluded at

10:00 A.M. The guidance program and kit entitled Developing understanding of self and others (Dinkmeyer, 1970) was employed often during these morning classroom guidance sessions. The students especially enjoyed the following DUSO activities: 1) singing the DUSO songs, 2) discussing the DUSO guidance stories, 3) role playing the DUSO activity situations, and 4) guided play therapy using the DUSO puppets. The DUSO guidance activities were very popular with the students.

The author also shared the guidance story I am loveable and capable (Simon, 1973) with the students in the class. The IALAC concept that everyone is loveable and capable was very popular with the students. Put-downs were discouraged. The author encouraged the students to look for the positive in themselves and in other people. The author also incorporated selected topics on feelings from the Magic circle activity-guide (Bessell & Palomares, 1972) with the students seated in a semi-circle on the classroom floor. The four most popular Magic circle topics were: 1) I can tell about a person who gives me good feelings, 2) I can do something nice for you, 3) I can cooperate with you, and 4) I can serve you. The students definitely benefited from sharing their inner feelings with the class. This activity also increased their language expression at the same time.

However, the most popular S.L.I. classroom guidance activity was the selection of one student each week for 12 weeks as the "Good Citizen of the Week" for the entire week. The teacher and the school Guidance Counselor selected the most deserving student each week for this recognition. The winner's name and picture was displayed on a

bulletin board in the S.L.I. classroom. The winning student also received a special certificate to take home. Earning these certificates also reinforced the positive behaviors that were being promoted weekly during the individual, small group, and classroom guidance sessions with the S.L.I. students.

The author consulted on a daily basis with the teacher of the Severely Language Impaired class. The author listened to the teacher's feelings concerning any difficulty that any S.L.I. student might be having in the classroom. To reinforce the importance of building the self-concept of the S.L.I. students in the classroom, the author shared an excellent article with the S.L.I. teacher. The article was entitled 26 tips for building self-concept (Tindel, 1983). Four of these tips are: 1) listen for feeling and content when a student speaks, 2) praise in public, correct in private, 3) speak out and comment on strengths; then build on them, and 4) admit that you do not know it all and ask him/her to work with you in finding the answers. The S.L.I. teacher and the school Guidance Counselor employed many of the 26 self-concept tips during this practicum.

Following the suggestions of Cummings and Maddux (1983) parent conferences were conducted on a monthly basis with the S.L.I. students. The author followed the advice given in The disabled and their parents: A counseling challenge (Buscaglia, 1975) during these conferences. Love and respect are necessary keys in our relationships with others. The author shared various methods that the parents could use to help improve the self-concept of their children in the home. The author

listened emphatically to any problems that they might be having at home. Student pictures for the "Good Citizen of the Week" guidance program were also secured at these parent conferences. The parents expressed enthusiasm and appreciation to the author for taking the time to work on a positive basis with their children.

At the conclusion of the three month self-concept guidance program, the author administered the post-test of the I Feel ... Me Feel Self-Concept Appraisal Inventory (Yeatts & Bentley, 1970) to each S.L.I. student. The post-tests were then scored and recorded on the total results table (Appendix A). The author also recorded the total absences of the S.L.I. students during the 12 week practicum. These absences were recorded on the six month attendance record table (Appendix B).

During the last week of school, June 3 through June 6, 1985, the author displayed the pictures of the S.L.I. students holding their Good citizen awards (Certificates) in the front office of Harbor City Elementary School. The results of the practicum were also shared with the school faculty and staff. Many teachers expressed an interest in having a similar self-concept guidance program in their classrooms during the 1985-86 school year. The results of the practicum were also shared with the School Psychologist. The author also wrote a personal letter to each parent with a child in the S.L.I. class. The author shared the results of the self-concept guidance program with the

parents, thanked them for the opportunity of working with their children during the last 12 weeks of school, and wished them all a happy and safe summer vacation.

Chapter V

Results, Conclusions, and Recommendations

Results

The practicum was designed to help the severely language impaired students at Harbor City Elementary School in two basic areas: 1) to increase and enhance the student's low self-concept, and 2) to reduce absenteeism. The first behavioral objective was that 80% of the students would have improved self-concepts. Improved was defined as at least a 10 point gain on the I Feel ... Me Feel Self-Concept Appraisal Inventory (Yeatts & Bentley, 1970). The second behavioral objective of the practicum was that student absenteeism would decrease by 50%.

All 12 students from the S.L.I.. class took part in the practicum. Fortunately, all 12 students showed some improvement on the post-test of the self-concept appraisal inventory. The improvement in points gained from the pre-test to the post-test scores ranged from a low of one point to a high of 52 points (Appendix A). The mean average in self-concept points gained for all 12 students was 20 points. However, four students gained less than 10 points over the 12 week practicum period. Therefore only eight students made at least a 10 point gain on the post-test. Only 75% of the students in the S.L.I. class reached the expected 10 point gain in self-concept points. Since the author's goal was to have 80% of the students obtain at least a 10 point gain in self-concept points, the first behavioral objective therefore was not completely obtained.

The second behavioral objective was that the students in the S.L.I. class would have improved attendance records. Specifically, the

goal was that student absenteeism would decrease by 50%. There were 42 total absences for the 12 weeks preceding the practicum. There were 28 total absences for the 12 weeks of the practicum implementation period. Therefore, students were absent for 14 fewer days during the self-concept guidance program period. This resulted in a 33% decrease in absenteeism (Appendix B). However, the author's goal of the practicum was that absenteeism would decrease by 50%. Therefore, the second behavioral objective of this practicum was not completely realized either. In conclusion, even though progress was made by the students, neither one of the author's behavioral objectives were totally realized.

Conclusions

In interpreting the results of this practicum, the author agrees with Durbin (1982) that the length of time for each guidance session be lengthened. Specifically, the author would lengthen the individual counseling sessions from 20 minutes to 30 minutes. The small group counseling sessions would be lengthened from 40 minutes to one hour in length. The classroom guidance sessions would also be lengthened from 45 minutes to one hour in duration. Lengthening the time for each different counseling setting would allow more time for the important work involved in enhancing a student's self-concept. Self-concept enhancement takes time.

Since the two basic behavioral objectives of the practicum were not completely obtained, the author would also incorporate more of the self-concept guidance principles into the regular S.L.I. classroom

curriculum. Also J.E. Dobson, Campbell, and R.L. Dobson (1982) found that it is crucial to recognize the individual's self-concept as part of the school curriculum. Self-concept enhancement must be a part of the total learning process in the schools. Specifically, inservice training is needed by the regular and the exceptional education teachers on ways to enhance the self-concept of students on a daily basis. Self-concept enhancement is not just the work of the school Guidance Counselor. United team involvement is the key to improving the self-concept of students at the school level.

One other explanation is necessary as to why the objectives of this practicum were not completely realized. Weekly instead of monthly parent contacts would be more appropriate for this work to be completely successful. The school and the home must work cooperatively together in this important adventure. In the future, the author would also include more parenting classes on ways for parents to enhance the self-concept of their children in the some. The author believes that the best way to help children is to help their parents. Parent education is the key. Parents must be actively involved in the total development of their children. The school and the home must become better educational partners, in order for us to reach our lofty goals.

One welcome, but unanticipated outcome from the practicum occured when the author shared the results of the practicum with the Harbor City Elementary School faculty. Many of the classroom teachers expressed an interest in having a similar self-concept guidance program in their classrooms during the next school year. Inservice

training for teachers is definitely needed in the area of self-concept improvement in the classroom. The author believes that the implication is that self-concept enhancement is needed in all the grades, with both regular and exceptional education students.

The author concludes the findings of the practicum with the following summary. The two behavioral objectives and goals of the practicum were not fully realized. Three explanations for not accomplishing these goals were offered. First, the length of time for each guidance session should be increased as described. Second, self-concept enhancement principles should be a part of the total school curriculum. Inservice training for teachers is needed in this area. Third, the home and school must work closer together in communicating ways to enhance the child's self-concept both in the school and in the home. Regular and active parent education groups are also needed. Although the specific objectives and goals of the practicum were not reached, the teacher of the Severely Language Impaired class stated that the self-concept guidance program had been "very helpful" for the S.L.I. students. Many other teachers in the Harbor City Elementary School stated that they would also like to take part in a self-concept guidance program with their students during the next school year. The author will follow through on these requests.

Recommendations

The author recommends the following three specific ways this practicum could benefit others. First, almost all students, especially those students in exceptional education programs, could benefit from an

organized, multidimentional self-concept guidance program. Second, teachers are in need of inservice training on ways they can incorporate self-concept guidance principles into the total school curriculum. Finally, the schools must work together with the parents in bringing about an effective, positive improvement in the child's self-concept.

As requested, the author plans on furthering and expanding the self-concept guidance program to other grades and classes at Harbor City Elementary School during the next school year. In the fall of 1985, the school Principal will be consulted concerning the possibility of conducting inservice training for the entire school faculty on ways to build the student's self-concept in the classroom. This comprehensive approach will also make the school Guidance Counselor's work easier in the long run. Finally, the author also plans on offering regular parent education classes at Harbor City Elementary School so that interested parents can learn more effective ways to communicate and enhance the self-concept of their children in the home.

Dissemination

In June, 1985 the results of this practicum were shared with the parents of the S.L.I. students, the faculty and staff of Harbor City Elementary School, and with the School Psychologist. In September, 1985 the author will share the results of this practicum with the Brevard County Florida School Board, the other Guidance Counselors in Brevard County, and with the Brevard Association for Children Under Six

(B.A.C.U.S.). Also in the fall of 1985, the results of this practicum will be shared and practicum abstracts will be distributed to each colleague in cluster 16. The Ed. D students in cluster 16 meet on the Nova University campus in Fort Lauderdale, Florida.

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APPENDIX A

TABLE: TOTAL RESULTS OF THE I FEEL ... ME FEEL
SELF-CONCEPT APPRAISAL INVENTORY

TABLE: TOTAL RESULTS OF THE I FEEL ... ME FEEL
SELF-CONCEPT APPRAISAL INVENTORY

STUDENT:	PRE-TEST SCORE:	POST-TEST SCORE:	POINT DIFFERENCE
1	176	196	+ 20
2	92	130	+ 38
3	166	172	+ 6
4	162	188	+ 26
5	107	159	+ 52
6	150	151	+ 1
7	164	183	+ 19
8	182	196	+ 14
9	148	185	+ 37
10	186	193	+ 7
11	178	183	+ 5
12	165	182	+ 17
MEAN:	156	176	+ 20

SELF-CONCEPT APPRAISAL INVENTORY KEY:

40 POINTS: VERY SAD
80 POINTS: A LITTLE SAD
120 POINTS: NOT SAD, NOT HAPPY
160 POINTS: A LITTLE HAPPY
200 POINTS: VERY HAPPY

APPENDIX B

TABLE: SIX MONTH ATTENDANCE RECORD

TABLE: SIX MONTH ATTENDANCE RECORD

TOTAL ABSENCES BEFORE PRACTICUM:	TOTAL ABSENCES DURING PRACTICUM:	PERCENT INCREASE OR DECREASE IN ABSENTEEISM
A. 6 WEEKS: 30	A. 6 WEEKS: 11	THERE WAS A
B. 6 WEEKS: 12	B. 6 WEEKS: 17	33% DECREASE
T. 12 WEEKS: 42	T. 12 WEEKS: 28	IN ABSENTEEISM